JIMMY'S DREAM GONE SOUR

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It is not James Buchanan, or Jimmy Carter, Or James Watt or Jimmy the Greek - although all had dreams that soured. This paper is about James VI, King of Scotland, who became James I of England, when Elizabeth I finally died, childless. And it is about an idea that is surely a candidate for one of the worst in all of history: a dream gone sour.

But that gets us ahead of ourselves. First, a thesis: Barbara Tuchman, in the opening paragraph of her fine book, The March of Folly, observes:

> "A phenomenon noticeable throughout history regardless of place or period is the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interests... Why do holders of high office so often act contrary to the way reason points and enlightened self interest suggests? Why does intelligent mental process seem so often not to function?"

Having made her observation and posed the question, Tuchman proceeds to a not altogether cheerful analysis of several major illustrations: the Trojans taking the wooden horse inside the walls, Britain losing America, and America betraying herself in Vietnam. One which she did not treat, but could have, is the subject of my paper this evening.

It was brought into the sharpest focus for me on the evening of June 12, 1981. I found myself in an unlikely situation, drinking a little gin and ouzo of all things, with a group of married women, all Roman Catholics, who lived in the Lower Falls section of Belfast. My wife and I, and two other adults were with a group of Columbus young people, visiting, working, and observing at Corrymeela, a retreat center near Ballycastle, on the northeast Antrim coast of Northern Ireland. Corrymeela, which is also part of what this paper is about, is a very small candle, burning in a very big darkness. It is a kind of religious community, although it is not parochially nor zealously religious. It is supported ecumenically, an unusual phenomenon in Northern Ireland. But it is also supported by plenty of people whose main or only concern in not sectarian religion of any kind but peace in Northern Ireland, which is Corrymeela's sole purpose.

We were there for a week with seventeen youngsters from Columbus,

participating in one of Corrymeela's specialties called a "North-South Dialogue." The idea is simple enough. Recruit a group of Dublin Catholics, Derry Protestants, and a mixed group from Belfast, all teen-agers, most unemployed, and without nearly as much expectation or structure as we Americans would prefer, let them spend a weekend together: listening to music, dancing, talking, maybe even making friendships. A simple idea, and a radical one because there aren't many places for that sort of thing to happen in Ulster.

The seventeen Presbyterian Preppies from Columbus were receiving an education they will not forget, and so were the adults. We were attached to a group called, simply Belfast Mums. There were about a dozen, from what can accurately be called an urban slum. They were Catholic, they had a lot of children; several of their husbands were in prison, under the British-Direct Rule Internment policy. The rest were unemployed; several were separated. Corrymeela invites groups of them up for the weekend: provides child care and again, without much by way of American obsessive programming, simply provides the exquisite luxury of forty-eight hours in which to take walks, talk, or stay in bed if they wish. These women were beginning their weekend with a bit of a party. Each had brought a sack of sandwiches and some liquid refreshment. In addition to the gin and ouzo, which they seemed to favor, there were several bottles of wine. They offered - we accepted. After all - "When in Ballycastle..." you know how that goes.

We talked some, awkwardly at first, then with more comfort. We had been briefed a bit, and had decided to avoid revealing the fact that two of us were Presbyterian clergymen as long as possible. We asked, gently and carefully, about their feelings, and slowly they told us about a society bitterly divided and a personal life consumed with anger, and a future which offered no hope. It was June 1981. Bobby Sands, an IRA Provisional, also a member of Parliament, had died one month earlier, in the H. Block of Maze prison in Belfast. The "blanket men" were in the news: there were more hunger strikers and enough random violence in Northern Ireland that my Columbus constituents wondered about our responsibility, if not our sanity. As the evening wore on, they began to sing the songs of Ireland, the patriotic, nationalistic music of protest. One of them said: "Let's sing one for Bobbie." They did: it was sad, and poignant, frightening, and enlightening. It was not about religion. It was about Ireland and British occupation and religion was never mentioned. That ended the evening. We saw the women in the morning. They never spoke to us. They had discovered, I suppose that we were Protestant ministers. They had allowed us to get closer than they or anyone else would understand.

And so, I have continued to watch that unhappy situation - even as the American press has become bored with it. And a daughter of mine has returned for several stints as a volunteer at Corrymeela, and we try to raise a little money for the work of peacemaking there, and I write regularly to several good friends.

My interest is also partially familial. Around the 1740s an ancestor of mine was one of the thousands of Scotsmen who migrated from Glasgow and the borders, to Belfast, and from there to Pennsylvania. He was part of an important influx int he 18th century: the Scotch-Irish, builders of

canals, railroads, miners, hardworking, frugal people - deeply committed to law and order and education. There are 16 million Americans of direct Irish descent and there are far more Scotch-Irish in this country than in the six counties of Ulster. They have produced eleven presidents.

And now a confession. My premise was that when one began to study the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, one would come to the conclusion that someone, somewhere made a bad mistake. My further assumption was that the someone was probably James I. Only an amateur historian would make two assumptions that simple, and I am here to confess that my study has not led me to conclude that James was any more guilty than a lot of other people. But it was his idea and it didn't work and he is worth knowing.

In 1609 James VI of Scotland, who was the James I of England, issued a royal proclamation which read:

> "Whereas great scopes and extents of land in the several counties of Armagh, Tyrone, Coleraine, Donegal, Fermanagh, and Caran are escheated and come to our hands by the attainder of sundry traitors and rebels, we considered how much it would advance the welfare of that kingdom if the said land were planted with colonies of civil men and well-affected in religion: whereupon there was a project concerned for the division of said land into proportions, and for the distribution of the same into undertakers."

There it is: a dream to expand and secure the kingdom, and to pacify the troublesome Irish papists. Who was this man who so seriously miscalculated - at the same time he was presiding over the age of Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Johnson, and the Authorized Translation of the Bible which still bears his name?

He was the only son of Mary, Queen of Scots and Lord Darnley, born on June 19, 1566, in a small room in Edinburgh Castle where today a visitor can see the initials of mother and son entwined in a carved crest on the ceiling. He was baptized a Roman Catholic in the Chapel Royal at Stirling Castle on December 17, 1566. Elizabeth I of England sent representatives - Protestants - who waited outside.

Mary married Bothwell soon after, was forcibly separated from her husband by a group of nobles on June 15, 1567, incarcerated and never saw her son again. On the tiny island of Lochleven, under house arrest, she signed the Acts of Abdication in favor of her son. Her relative, Elizabeth I, Queen of England, eventually had her executed - and that is truly another story. James, in the meantime, at the age of 13 months, was crowned James VI, King of Scotland, still at Stirling, but this time in the Protestant Church.

He was educated by a brilliant but cranky old humanist, George Buchanan. His theological preference was the Calvinism his nation had adopted in 1560, although his ecclesiastical choice clearly was Anglicanism.

Physically he was a man of medium height, with broad shoulders and bent legs from childhood rickets which caused him to limp. He was somewhat

of a fanatic about exercise and spent much of his time hunting. A series of wards saw to his childhood needs: old Buchanan drilled him in Latin and his biographers agree that he had everything except the one thing he needed which was a little love.

Antonia Fraser speculates that the aridness of his childhood caused him to fall madly in love the first time affection was offered to him. It was with a young man, an emissary from his mother's French relatives, the Guises.

In June of 1583, James assumed the throne - at the age of 17. Apparently his French cousin was a passing fancy, for he traveled to Norway in the middle of winter to meet and wed his bride Anne, fourteen year old daughter of the Norwegian King. He spent the winter in Oslo. James Melville observed wryly, "Having traveled through many woods and wilderness, in the confined frost and snow... there made good cheer and drank stoutly till spring time."

The marriage was no charade. There were seven children, of whom three survived.

James ruled Scotland rather well after the Scottish noble settled down. He did a lot of hunting, wrote some and, in that Elizabeth had still not produced an heir, and James had a bit of a claim to the throne, actually began to court the Crown. He named his eldest daughter after Elizabeth, for instance.

Elizabeth died March 24, 1603 and that day James VI of Scotland was proclaimed James I of England and on April 5 departed on what Dr. Johnson cynically termed, "The noblest prospect which a Scotsman ever sees - the high road that leads him to England."

James devised a divine right of king's doctrine that was offensive to his Calvinist subjects, kept a court that was, by all standards, unkempt and vulgar, vigorously disapproved of the use of tobacco, and kept a kind of zoo at the tower of London.

He proposed the union with Scotland - and then suddenly found himself with the marvelous opportunity to resolve the centuries-old dilemma the English had with Ireland. A rebellion of Irish chiefs had been crushed, the Earls Tyrone and Tyrconnel had fled, the Anglo-Spanish peace relieved his concern about a Catholic invasion. Even the Irish looked to him hopefully. But history's verdict is that Barbara Tuchman was correct. We do not govern well. Antonia Fraser writes: "Unfortunately the policy which James thought most likely to end Ireland's troubles, that of plantation, turned out to be most likely to prolong them. [p. 146]

He invited British aristocrats, tradesmen, lawyers, farmers to settle and manage estates in the counties of the North of Ireland. He invited border Scots, some of his more troublesome subjects to do the work. James was not slow - even if he was terribly wrong. In one maneuver he planned to transform an alien culture into a little bit of Britain, relieve himself of some of his more troublesome subjects, and enhance his exchequer by appropriating the properties of the Scots who immigrated to Ulster. When I

was an exchange pastor in a village in the border county, near Dumfries in 1978, I baptized the child of a Crown agent, who was managing farm land which had come to the possession of James I. It was a good idea. It simply didn't work in Ulster. It still doesn't. Fraser evaluates, "King James was merely one of along series of British sovereigns and leaders who had not the faintest understanding of the history, hopes, and fears of the Irish people." [p. 147]

Jonathan Swift, a little closer to the scene, came to a similar conclusion in 1724. Wrote he: "As to Ireland, the English know little more than they do of Mexico, further than that is a country subject to the King of England, full of boggs, inhabited by wild Irish papists..."

Where actually did it begin? How did the English get involved in Ireland in the first place? At the beginning of the 13th century a Pope of English origin simply granted Ireland to England... in hopes that England might keep the Irish a little more attentive to Rome. English kings in the Middle Ages were always conscious of the threat from the West. It was Richard II who actually made the first move, as far as I can determine. "An Irish chieftain asked his help in resolving a military matter with a rival chief and Richard was only too happy to oblige... thus beginning an effort of conquest that continued into the 20th century." [This analysis, and that which follows is devised from MacEoin, Northern Ireland, Captive of History, p. 110ff]

In their efforts to subjugate and rule Ireland the Norman English had superior weapons and far more organized and efficient military tradition. But according to Arnold Toynbee the Irish had a "more powerful secret weapon. Far Western Christian Civilization... which was stronger, more developed, and deeper than any culture around."

Now there is a curious and instructive twist to all of this. Irish culture and the Irish church are tightly interwoven in the Middle Ages... and the Irish church, in flavor, theology, style, and spirit was rather independent of Rome. Its brand of monasticism was uniquely Celtic. Irish monks married, for instance... the Irish church celebrated Easter on a different day from the rest of the Roman church. And so it was in the Roman church's interest - before the Reformation at least, for England to succeed in conquering the obstreperous Irish - at least to bring them on board ecclesiastically.

One scholar notes: "Rome blessed the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland even before it began. From the beginning every effort was made to destroy the Irish system of learning and way of life." (p. 118)

By the middle of the 13th century two-thirds of Ireland was controlled by England... but the Irish fought bitterly and in the North - successfully for another century. In an interesting vignette, Edward Bruce, brother of Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, came across and led the Irish effort very successfully... had himself actually crowned King of Ireland and kept a relatively independent state for several years. By the 15th century English control and government had dwindled and was effective only in Dublin and surrounding counties.

And then Henry VIII, whose rule so enormously changed the course of Western history. Henry turned his ample attention to Ireland. His policy was simple and as disastrous as James I's. Henry thought he could make the Irish English. He was, of course, having his own problems with Rome on the subject of marriage, church and state, generally. In 1537, Henry instructed his bishops in Ireland to have each clergy found a school - the purpose of which was to teach English - an alien and hated tongue. Now Rome, which blessed the Anglo-Norman conquest in Ireland did a 180 degree turn, realized a deeper threat, and began to dig in against now Protestant England. Henry contributed in another way to the passionate Catholicism of the Irish. When the English church broke with Rome, Henry made it Anglican by, among other things, changing the language of liturgy from Latin to English. For some reason, he did not make that change in Ireland. but despising the Irish language, he could not allow Gaelic Mass, and so curiously the church in Ireland, under Henry's pragmatic Protestantism, under political and cultural siege, continued to speak the language of Rome - almost as an act of political defiance.

Elizabeth succeeded Henry and under her long reign, during the last half of the 16th century, English control extended and included the whole country - except Ulster in the north. And it was under Elizabeth, the Protestant, that religion became a way of identifying the players in Ireland. A Protestant was a loyalist. A Catholic was seen to be an enemy of the Crown. Meanwhile the chieftains in Ulster held out a long time, were defeated - barely - by Elizabeth's armies. As usual, resistance to the British had a galvanizing effect on the Irish. The O'Donnels in Donegal, the MacDonnels in Antrim and the O'Neills in the middle, joined forces and held the British at bay for nine years, until a blockade finally forced their capitulation. The nobility fled for their lives to Europe, their extensive estates in the Northern countries were simply appropriated by Elizabeth and the stage was set for James' sour dream.

James' fateful decision was to complete what Henry VIII and Elizabeth I had begun, and to do it thoroughly by replacing one culture with another and in the process eliminating the difficult Ulster problem in the final solution.

Thus the disastrous royal proclamation inviting colonization. Hundreds took the offer immediately. By 1640 there were 40,000 belligerent Scots Presbyterians in Ulster. James, no doubt, was glad to be rid of them. In fact they didn't amount to much as Presbyterians at first. The Church of Scotland sent Presbyterian missionaries over to Ulster, as a matter of fact, and the Scots embraced the Kirk as a little bit of home away from home with their customary belligerence. In the process they substituted suspicion and hatred of Rome and the Irish, for their more traditional suspicion and hatred of the Crown and the English. Besides, one of theirs was now on the British throne.

The Irish fought the British twice more in the 17th century and lost both times, and all the while the Roman faith was becoming more and more identified with Irish culture and with the cause of freedom from the British. The Catholic Irish were not allowed inside the fortress towns the Protestant planters built in the north. They were, in addition, banished from the land they owned and worked. In 1641, the first "Rising" resulted

in a Protestant massacre. Cromwell came through in 1650 and massacred the Catholics of Drogheda. After Cromwell, Charles II, a Catholic, nodded in the direction of his Irish subjects and his brother James II, got himself ousted by Parliament in favor of William of Orange, fled to Ireland and opened shop. James II authorized the Dublin parliament to restore land to former Irish owners. The Protestants in Ulster, who now had been there for two generations, violently resisted. Now the Catholic armies marched north to crush a Presbyterian rebellion. Derry resisted a siege for 105 days and produced the raw material of patriotic legend. William of Orange finally caught James in the north and won battles at Boyne and Aughrim, all of which became important in Ulster folk-lore. The dates of July 12, when Orangemen celebrate the battle of Boyne till August 12, when the Apprentice Boys of Derry reenact the defense of the city in 1689 - are the infamous marching season in Ulster.

What happened when the smoke cleared was predictable but no less tragic. British mistakes are understandable, but none the less disastrous in their effect. After the Battle of Boyne and the defeat of the Irish Catholic Army, a series of Penal Laws were enacted, by the Irish parliament in Dublin, which was exclusively Protestant. The Penal Laws excluded Catholics from the Armed Forces, judiciary, the legal profession, and from Parliament. Catholics were forbidden to carry arms or own a horse worth more than five pounds. In 1697 all Irish bishops and clergy were banished. Catholics were forbidden to hold leases on land, or to buy land from Protestants.

The effect on the Penal Laws, of course, was to solidify the deep divide between Catholics and Protestants, and ultimately to strengthen Irish Catholicism by giving it a cultural and political base and a cause to die for. One of the lessons history suggests is that religion becomes tenacious when people start dying for it. In any event Catholic Gaelic culture went underground and thrived.

The second half of the 18 century produced alliances between Presbyterians - who have always had a bit of a problem squaring their theology with any monarchy -- and the Catholics, and the result was a series of Penal Laws against Presbyterians. In the Wexford Rising of 1787, thirty of our brother Presbyterian clergy were accused of collusion and three were hanged. The Orange Orders were formed to challenge the new Presbyterian-Catholic friendliness and to advocate the Protestant cause in the north.

In 1800, the Catholic population of Belfast was 10%. But in three decades of furious industrial expansion, the Catholic population rose to 30% and the Protestants started to get scared. At the same time the Irish Presbyterian Church, normally at least a rational organization, rejected its liberal wing which broke away, leaving the church in control of hard-line, Orange Order types.

The 19th century saw the steady widening of the polarization. Because of the continuing infusion of British capital, the Industrial Revolution happened largely in the north - in Ireland. For the same reasons the north was insulated from the potato famines. In 1834 pressure mounted to repeal the hated Penal Laws. Home Rule was discussed openly, even in Ulster, and then a fateful partnership emerged in London: The Conservative Party

took up the cause of Ulster Unionism - i.e. union with Great Britain. That partnership was characterized by Lord Randolph Churchill's famous remarks -- about Gladstone, who adopted a position favoring Home Rule: "We've got the old man hooked," and in a speech in Ulster, to a wildly cheering mob of Protestants, "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right." He was correct, of course, at least about the fighting. A new Conservative Party position emerged on the Irish question: Keeping the counties of the north as part of Great Britain and separate from the Catholic south became a moral and religious crusade. It was based, not only on a dying Imperialism, but on Protestant fear which could become a belligerent bigotry - and immediately did. Now the Orange Orders emerged to provide the noise and energy to propel the cause of Union.

On the other side of it, the forces of Home Rule were expressed by the Fenians - who were revolutionaries and later the Irish Republic Army. In the late 19th century Irish Nationalism came into its own and historians generally agree that the only thing that prevented a full civil war in Ireland was the First World War.

The Easter Rising, 1916, began the guerrilla war in the south which finally produced a treaty in 1921 between the British government and the political wing of the IRA establishing a free Irish State - with the exception of the six counties of Ulster.

The intent, again, was different from what actually resulted. There were to be two states in Ireland, each with its own Parliament to deal with domestic matters: each with seats at Westminster, and a Council of Ireland was to deal with matters of common interest. It never met. Instead, old county boundaries became international borders - and in Northern Ireland the long and deep hostility began to erupt in violence. The Catholics in Northern Ireland rejected what were now clearly British, and therefore Protestant institutions. The police, for instance and the Ulster Special Constabulary, formed to fight the IRA - were almost entirely Protestant. The Education Act of 1930 established Protestant schools and allowed the Roman Catholics to sponsor their own Parochial schools, but they would have to raise 50% of the cost.

The depression was particularly severe in Northern Ireland. In 1933, for the first time in a century, no ship was launched in Belfast. Between 1930-39 unemployment never fell below 25% and in the fierce competition for jobs Protestants won more often than not.

In the meantime, relations between Ireland and Great Britain worsened. And every time that happened, Catholic Irish in Ulster appeared to be potentially subversive at worst, disloyal at best.

Gary MacEoin, newspaper man and author, tells how it was. He reports:

> "My first experience of the collective frenzy with which the Orangement each July 12 commemorate the Battle of the Boyne (1690) was in 1936. That was a quiet year, in contrast with 1935 when the marches had led to three weeks of burning and wrecking, with the loss of 12 lives, in one of Belfast's worst outbreaks of sectarian rioting. The bowler-hatted marchers

wore elaborate sashes and collarettes over their dark suits. Were it not for their stern, set faces, they might pass for a Shriner convention. The banners recalled past glories, William of Orange crossing the Boyne, the breaking of the boom as the siege of Derry was raised. From time to time, a banner saluted the virtue of temperance, about the only salute it would receive that day. Union Jacks streamed from windows and were waved by onlookers. 'To hell with the Pope' was scratched with unimaginative monotony on every wall and billboard, the current four-letter disposition of His Holiness not having then come into its own. Bands playing partisan tunes whipped marchers and onlookers into a frenzy of exaltation. The key instrument was the Lambeg drum, struck with short sticks in such a way as to cause the drummer's knuckles to bleed profusely, the mark of a true professional. In such a context a spark is all that is needed to start a pogrom." [p 13-14]

In Dublin, the Irish Free State established a new constitution in 1937, changed the name of the nation to Eire, and dropped out of the Commonwealth. In 1908, the Irish Hierarch had forbidden Catholics to marry non-Catholics and in the rare cases where exceptions were made, the children must be raised as Catholics. In 1950 that ecclesiastical provision became the law of the land. The 1937 Constitution established the special position of the Roman Church in Irish society as the protector and guardian of the faith. Divorce was declared illegal, as was the sale of contraceptive devices and provision was made for strict censorship of books and plays.

The Protestant population of the Republic, which once was 10%, declined -- under those provisions, to 5%: of which 3.7% are Church of Ireland, which is what the Episcopal Church is called; .6% Presbyterian; and .3% Methodist. The law requiring raising children as Catholics in fact appears to be working to eliminate all Protestants, a prospect that does get the attention of those belligerent Presbyterians in Ulster.

In Northern Ireland the Second World War brought great prosperity. And the fifties and sixties seemed to be decades of hope. The IRA mounted an offensive in 1956 which failed to generate much support. It was officially abandoned in 1962 and the IRA became respectable, deciding to work for political goals within the system.

And then, in the early sixties the situation changed radically. Irish nationalism found its voice again in Ulster. The tri-color was flown at a Belfast political office in 1964, and when a crowd attempted to remove it a riot followed. At the forefront was one of those unfortunate individuals whose historical importance is genuine and tragic. His name was Ian Paisley, head of the tiny Free Presbyterian Church, a nasty, unhappy, fundamentalist sect which is bitterly anti-Catholic and pro-British. Paisley, who was elected to Parliament, has continued to symbolize Ulster's agony: a leadership that is narrow, sectarian, bigoted, and simply inadequate.

In 1967 a Civil Rights movement began within the Catholic community of Ulster and received international press attention. There were marches,

demonstrations, and prodded by Paisley's vitriolic and vulgar anti-Catholicism, a strong Protestant counter reaction.

On August 12, 1968, the Protestant Apprentice Boys of Derry, an organization like the Orange Orders, held a march and were attacked by Derry Catholics. MacEoin remembers, "The violence of police reactions in Catholic Bogside produced two important results: The Prime Minister of Ireland, Jack Lynch, made his famous 'we will not stand by' speech and violence spread to Belfast. In August, the Catholic Lower Falls area was invaded by a hostile mob of Protestants. Seven persons were killed, 3,000 left homeless, and the situation was utterly changed."

Great Britain sent the army into Derry on August 14, 1968 and the next day to Belfast. This time the old wounds between Westminster, Dublin, and Belfast were reopened in the full view of a world television audience.

The Provisional IRA was formed in January of 1970 and on October 31 of that year the Provos killed their first British soldier. The Protestants in Ulster mounted pressure for an aggressive internment policy, which began in 1971, followed by deep resentment and bloody riots. By 1972, 2,000 IRA suspects were incarcerated, and in the process Great Britain was accused and found guilty by the Strasbourg Court, arbiter of human rights in Western Europe, of five violations for the policy itself and for the way its prisoners were treated.

In 1972 Westminster suspended the Stormont, Ulster's Parliament, and began Direct Rule, which continues today. Sometime in the 70s the people of Northern Ireland adjusted to their situation: the world press got bored with it; the deep polarization in society became institutionalized. The old Unionist sentiment was expressed in the United Ulster Unionist Council. Nationalists all vote in the Social Democrat and Labor Party, and parties of the Center claim only 10-15% of the vote. It doesn't take long in Ulster to discover that the middle ground is a very small territory.

What is it like today? There are only a million and a half people in Ulster, on third of whom live in Belfast. Roman Catholics constitute the largest religious denomination - 35% of the total population. Presbyterians are next at 29%; Church of Ireland - 24%; Methodist - 5%; others - 7%. The most interesting religious statistic, however, is that there are virtually no atheists. A recent survey in Ulster could turn up only 1,200 agnostics and 510 who called themselves atheists.

Religion, unfortunately in this instance, provides tribal identity. Religion, on either side, is deeply conservative, closed to the outside, exclusive and absolutely certain of the ultimate truth of its own dogma. Irish Christianity seems not to have evolved, but to be stuck somewhere in the 16th or 17th century. Irish Catholicism is conservative, in large measure unaffected by the liberalizing influences of Vatican II. Presbyterianism, as well, is not open and liberal. Several years ago when there was discussion of a papal visit, a motion nearly passed on the floor of the Presbyterian General Assembly that - should the pope visit, and should the Presbyterians be invited to an ecumenical event - they weren't going to attend. Neither Roman Catholics nor Protestants are enthusiastic about ecumenical movement, in fact they are suspicious of it.

In Christians in Ulster, a book on the affect of religion on the Troubles, the authors conclude that while it is not fundamentally a religions dispute, the bitter religious polarization has prevented the process of assimilation and healing from taking place. The simple discouraging of inter-marriage, for instance, has kept the distance wide.

There are two school systems, each state supported. The public schools, which are Protestant; and the Parochial, Catholic schools. Catholics may attend Protestant schools. None do. We visited both: were warmly received; our youngsters talked with their peers on each side; in Ballycastle, the schools are literally across the street from one another: the Catholic High School was newer and cleaner and better equipped. It was not possible to visit them both, however, without knowing deeply the deep division in the culture. One can imagine how radically differently Irish history must be taught in the two schools.

Culturally, the bigotry continues. It is not a particularly pleasant topic, but it is very much a part of the problem. Protestant parliamentary organizations thrive although they are largely ignored by the American Press. There is something about IRA violence that receives our immediate attention - as blowing up the Prime Minister's seaside hotel, or Lord Mountbatten's ship, should. But in pure numbers, Protestant parliamentary's assassinate twice as many Catholics as the IRA assassinates Protestant victims.

Sociologists are beginning to see a relationship between the cultural bigotry of Ulster and the racism with which our country has had to deal. Bernard Nossiter, correspondent for the Washington Post observes, "Upper class Protestants have a contempt for Catholics that borders on racism" and quotes as typical a contractor who was a member of the Ulster Defense Association: "IRA lazy Fenian bastards don't want to work - just want to stay in their bloody pubs and drink. There is no such thing as a good Catholic."

Professor Fred Graham, Michigan State University, has done a fascinating study of the music of Ulster and concludes that the Catholic songs are political, telling of Ireland's struggle to be free from England while Protestant songs combine loyalty to the Crown with derogatory references to Rome.

My daughter Susan, now a medical student at Ohio State University, worked at Corrymeela last summer. I asked her to send me some material for this speech. She sent me two popular Protestant songs. The first is "The Sash."

"It is old but it is beautiful
And the colors they are fine.
It was worn in Devy, Aughrim,
Enniskillen, and the Boyne.
My father wore it in his youth,
In the bygone days of yore.
And its on the 12th I love to wear
The sash my father wore."

The second is "The Boys from Derry," a charming little ditty so scatological about the Pope and the Virgin Mary that Susan was embarrassed to sent it, and I to read it.

Where will it end? If history is a teacher - it probably won't. But it may subside, particularly if something resembling an economic recovery could happen in Ulster. Unfortunately, there is little about Ulster that commends itself to capital investment or even tourism. When you ask an Ulsterman how Americans can help, the answer is to stop giving money to either Ian Paisley's bigoted Protestant organization or the IRA and find some way to make that money work in the Ulster economy.

The degree of foreign involvement in the Troubles is a question mark. Karl Marx was fascinated with the possibilities of revolution. At one time Castro was nodding at Belfast and Colonel Kaddafi bragged about supporting the IRA. Weapons from Eastern bloc countries have shown up in the IRA, but so have plenty of American arms and explosives.

The best hope seems to be some kind of Rhodesian settlement, with a several year period in which a representative government would be formed. Britain would withdraw and the six counties would ultimately reunite with the rest of Ireland. For that to happen two very difficult hurdles have to be overcome. The Republic of Ireland must back away from some of its more overt Catholicism, say in divorce laws and the sale of birth control devices, and Great Britain must accept responsibility for Ulster refugees - Protestants who would elect to leave.

Donald Fraser, 75 year old, former Information Officer of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland and a personal friend, has told me that some kind of reunion must come - but that British withdrawal in the present would result in much violence if not civil war. Fraser wrote:

> "The violence continues but in different forms... The sounds coming from Downing Street are not encouraging. One of the positive elements has been the number of groups set up to give thought in depth to problems arising from the troubles. Of course the seeds will take time to germinate but they are sown in hope that they will flourish and bear fruit."

On the religious side of it - churches need to act like churches - and become signs of a kingdom in which fear and enmity are overcome. One would hope for less sectarianism and more ecumenism.

And so back to Corrymeela, where it all began for me: several white buildings on a gorgeous hillside overlooking the Irish Sea, where people of all faiths and none are invited to come to learn to live together. Until the structures change and churches start acting like churches, I'll look there, and places like it, for the hope that human beings can live together. Thus the final importance of the travail fo these few people, in those six small counties. History has been unkind to the people who must live in Ulster today. Jimmy's dream went sour and worse. Antonia Fraser concludes that "King James was merely one of a long series of British sovereigns and leaders who had not the faintest understanding of the

history, hopes, and fears of the Irish people." But if the decade of the 80s is teaching us anything, it is that we no longer have the luxury of carrying yesterday's mistakes into tomorrow. "Spaceship Earth" is smaller than anyone realized. And the first item on the agenda, for all of us, is the simple task of living together in the present so that there will be a future.

That happens, I trust, when people of good will try to understand one another... and I thank you for listening as I have tried to enhance that process this evening.

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